



An analytical study of Sumui: A north east traditional instrument of Tripura

Joyanta Sarkar¹, Anil Rai²

¹Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, India, Email: joyanta35032@gmail.com

²Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, India, Email: anilrai@pilani.bitspilani.ac.in

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General Note

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ABSTRACT

The Tripuri people of North-East India and Bangladesh are very fond of music as they are intimately interwoven with their socio-cultural lives. Due to its wealth and depth of myths connected with the birth of the first note, the Tripuri musical instruments and music of the Tripuri tribes appeal. By beating a drum, they always attempt to maintain the time and rhythm while dancing. The folk songs from Tripuri are called Tipra Bharat. The folk songs are as ancient as the tribe and have survived as a tradition throughout the centuries. Like all other folk songs from other areas, the Tripuri folk songs are commonly distributed throughout the society. These songs were composed by people whose identity is unrecognizable and overlooked in the early days of their collective life. Folk songs are based on ancient traditions, ideas, wishes, love, cultivation of jhum, harvesting, festivals, beliefs, superstitions and so on. The song theme has survived the time without any deviations and the folk songs are sung by the individuals spontaneously and enthusiastically in their initial shape or with slight variations until today. There are many traditional tools performed by people from Tripuri. As a consequence, the new generation individuals do not use most of such tools over time; these musical instruments are being wiped out of the globe. Most people in Tripuri now do not even know the names of such instruments and existence of such instruments. Most of the Younger generations do not even recognize these instruments. Some musical instruments are specific to

folk dance kinds. In this Paper we are presenting the Structure, Method of Producing tune, Construction, Playing procedure, and Fingering Chart of Sumui.

Keywords: Sumui, Tripuri Music, Musical Instruments, Tipra Bharat

1. BACKGROUND

People have been playing music for relaxation and spiritual upliftment since the beginning of time. This is because, beyond words, sound has a transformative property. Most of us had a feeling a bit low and a piece of music suddenly elevated them to a state of joy. A huge range of Instruments have been used over the centuries to tune us into music and communicate what we feel inside outwardly with sound. Perhaps the simplest way of making sounds is with wind so it is not surprising that Sumui are the oldest instrument of Tripura. Sumui indeed predate humankind. There have always been trees for instance where a hollowed out branch has broken off and the rush of the wind across its opening has produced the sound of the Sumui. Sumui then have a special quality their own since they entire are played with the breath. And just as the breath is the most vital energy source for the body, the sound of the Sumui is food for the soul. When we play or hear a Sumui we are resonating with an eternal vibration. This is the spirit of life. Throughout history bamboo has been a favored material for Sumui making. This is because of its natural hollow interior and marvelous resonance. Another reason for its use is that no two pieces are the same so a Sumui made from bamboo is truly a unique item and possesses a personality of its own. Tripura's Musical Instruments are made of locally accessible materials. Tripura's individuals respect the powerful natural forces and attempt to pacify animistic spirits and local gods. These instruments are made of horns of bamboo, skin, wood and animals. Each of these musical instruments is thought to have the ability to confer material advantages. Tripura's musical instruments are an essential component of the region's traditional folk music. One of the earliest instruments of the Sushira (wind) variety is the Sumui. The sumui is one of the most ancient and commonly played instruments in the musical tradition of Tripura. Sumui is the most perfect and least mechanical of all the instruments; the sumui is very dear to the tribes of Tripura. It is made of bamboo. There are two types of sumui, one having 7 (seven) holes and the other having 8 (eight) hole. Mostly found are two manipulator characteristic features:

- A) The ones kept by the mouth
- b) The ones retained by the mouth

The Sumui is a family of musical instruments in the woodwind group. Unlike woodwind instruments with reeds, a Sumui is an aerophone or reedless wind instrument that produces its sound from the flow of air across an opening. One of the oldest musical instruments of Tripura, the instrument is a key-less transverse Sumui made of bamboo. Both hands ' fingers are used for closing and opening the holes. The instruments are available in different dimensions. The Sumui is also a highly respected instrument and those who play it are expected to appreciate it, for it is considered a gift to be able to play it. The Sumui is capable of producing two and half octaves with the help of over-blowing and cross fingering. The Sumui is like the human voice in that it is monophonous and also has a typical two and half octave sound reproduction. Sliding the fingers on and off the holes enables a range of Gamakas to be produced, which is also essential in raga-based music performance. It was earlier only connected with folk music, but it is discovered in classical, filmic, and many other genres in Hindustani today.

2. CONSTRUCTION

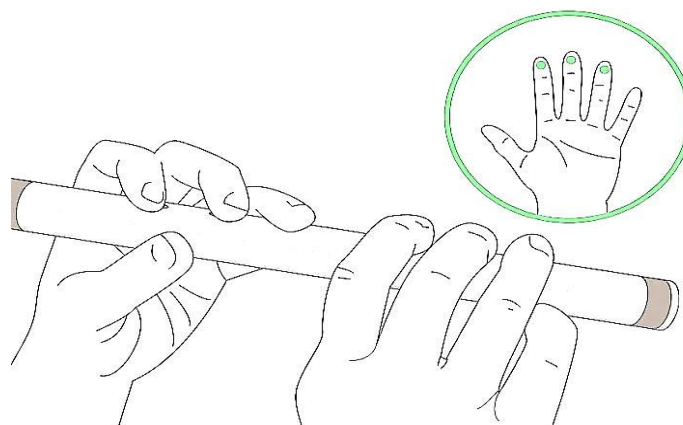
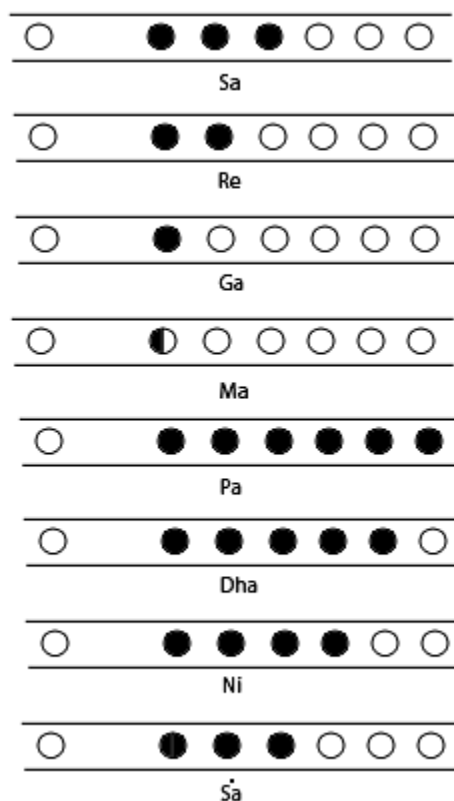
Indigenous cultures have used bamboo to create everything from tiki huts to watermills for a long time. Due to the versatility and strength of the plant species, it can be used for almost anything. That also includes musical instruments. Today, for stuff like flooring, fabric and even paper, it remains to be used for a variety. But when correctly carved, bamboo also makes lovely music. Sumui is made of a bamboo's hollow stem; the musician himself breaks the bamboo to a appropriate length and placing the bamboo in a playing situation determines the distances of the Sumui stops by merely placing his fingers in the place marking the areas where the two fingers closest to a bamboo node fall. The distance between them becomes the standard length and the labeled regions are burned with a warm iron nail when the whole location is determined. In the final phase, in alignment with the stop hole near the upper rim, a distinct mark is scratched closely at a range of one finger-width for a rectangular notch, sloping gradually as per stem width; the labeled region is sliced with a knife.

Playing

A Sumui is typically held horizontally slanting downwards towards right by the Sumui player. The right hand's index, middle and ring fingers cover the outer finger holes, while the left hand's same fingers cover the remainder. The Sumui is supported by the thumb

and little finger, while the air hole is positioned near the lips and air blown over it at different speeds to reach the desired octave. For the seven-hole Sumui, the little finger (pinky) of the right hand is usually employed. As with other air-reed wind instruments, the sound of a Sumui is generated from resonance of the air column inside it. The length of this column varies by a variable amount of holes being closed or left open. Half-holing is used for playing flat or small notes. The 'Sa' note (on the scale of Indian sargam, or equivalent 'do' on the octave) is obtained by separating from the blowing-hole the original three holes. By manipulating one's embouchure and regulating the blowing force, octaves are diverse. Sumui players use finger tips to partly or completely cover the tap holes. To execute the diatonic scale on a Sumui, we need to find out where the notes are. For instance, in a Sumui where Sa or tonic is always performed by closing the first three holes is equal to C, you can play sheet music by creating a finger notation that matches separate notes. A Sumui Player can execute complicated Raga music characteristics such as microtonal expressions, ornamentation, and glissando by differentiating the breath, performing fast and dexterous fingering, and shutting / opening the holes with slow, sweeping gestures.

Fingering Chart



Notes on Sumui

The seven (7) full tone notes come out as follows:-

Sa Medium Octave note about blowing mouth air and maintaining 3 holes from the side of the mouth hole closed.

Re Medium Octave note on blowing mouth air and maintaining 2 holes from the side of the mouth hole closed.

Ga Medium Octave note about blowing mouth air and maintaining 1 hole from the side of the mouth hole closed.

Medium Octave Tivra Ma note about blowing air out of the mouth and maintaining all the holes open.

Pa note of Lower Octave is closed from the side of the mouth hole on blowing air from the mouth and holding 6 holes.

Lower Octave's Dha note on blowing mouth air and maintaining 5 holes from the side of the mouth hole is closed.

Ni Lower Octave note on mouth blowing air and keeping 4 holes from the side of the mouth hole is closed.

Sa's Upper Octave note is closed from the side of the mouth hole on blowing air with double force and maintaining 3 holes.

All other Upper Octave notes can be performed on double force air blowing by the same technique. Half Tone Notes: (KomalSwara). Half Tone notes are four in number – Re-Ga-Dha-Ni.

There are two methods of playing half tone notes on Sumui:

1. By half-opening the holes.
2. By altering the notes ' stance.

Based on the first technique if we keep the holes of full tone notes half open, the half tone note will come out i.e.- On opening the hole No. 3 half – Re, opening hole No. 2 half – Ga, on opening hole No. 6 half – Dha and on opening hole No. 5 half – Ni will come out.

3. METHOD OF PRODUCING TUNE ON SUMUI

Important Facts

Before producing Tune on the Sumui the following points should be remembered:-

The tune of the songs should be thought over clearly, because the air is blown in the Sumui with the stroke of tongue according to the tune of the song. The holes of the Sumui must lightly kept closed without doing so, the sound produced will not be clear. The tip of the finger should be slightly lifted from the hole when playing half tone and sharp notes. It's the way to open the hole halfway. Air pressure from the mouth should be gradually increased in ascension and reduced in descent in the same way. At the time of playing on oblique Sumui the angle should be nearly right angle from the face, and when playing on straight Sumui the instrument should be kept at an angle of about 300 from the chest.

Points for the beginner

Keep the Sumui in proper pose and put the complete pressure of the tips of fingers on the holes so that they may keep air in tight position. Move the fingers in such a manner that the pressure of the next should not decrease when one finger is removed from the hole. Blowing air pressure is expected to boost in rise and reduce in descent. The air pressure and the tongue stroke should keep pace with each other at the moment of exercise and attempt to play all the notes in one breath moment little by little. They should be performed with the stroke of tongue when one note is to be played twice, such as SS RR GG etc. The tongue stroke should be administered on the grounds of tune. It is always necessary to keep in mind the moment and rhythm. The foot stroke is crucial at each matra moment when practicing. For half-tone notes, either alter the note position or play them with half-open holes. Practice better by altering the starting position of the notes. Keep the Sumui cork fitted and clean from inside. Some players use oil to smoothen the inner part of the Sumui to keep the Sumui in perfect tune. Have daily exercise for about half an hour and attempt to take advantage of the opportunity to play with well-versed players.

The Positions of Playing on Sumui

1. Sitting on the floor.
2. Sitting on and unarmed chair position.
3. Position in standing position.

Handling the Sumui

In an oblique situation, the Murali type Sumui is treated. The lower lip is touched by the primary hole. The air should be thrown into the hole with the upper lip so that it should go into the primary hole straight. The player should place on the hole numbers 6-5 and 4 respectively the lips of the first, second and third fingers of the left side, while on the whole numbers 3-2 and 1. Both hands ' thumbs should be held just opposite, i.e. the Sumui's lower side. Use the left thumb if there is a hole on the back side. The finger tips

should be put on the hole in such a manner that they can completely cover it, allowing the air to pass through only the outlet from which the second is to be generated. The Bansuri type Sumui is handled in straight position. As far as the player's play is concerned, the player should adjust the fingers and thumb in such a manner that the out - of-the-air hole can stay right in front of the mouth. The placing and the movement of fingers is the same as in Bansuri type Sumui.

4. CONCLUSION

There are distinct cultures in India, traditions followed by distinct kinds of people. We discover unity in Indian culture. Each Indian state has its own culture, tradition, and distinctive form of wear. Different tribal communities have survived in India because of its excellent philosophy and atmosphere that has created Indian places to live well. From ancient times, each state has nurtured their music style. In this work, we presented the Structure, Playing Style, Fingering method and Construction of Sumui.

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